

Burnside Bridge
PAULA MANSFIELD

THE NATURE OF CHANGE



No state can match the beauty of the Chesapeake Bay, our beaches and farms, the mountains of Western Maryland, the Port of Baltimore, or the historic charm of every corner of our state.

Ensuring that all Maryland citizens can benefit from these amazing natural assets requires a lot of hard work and dedica-

tion from everyone in state government. One of the priority areas of my administration is customer service and accountability. We want to change the culture of state government. It's about the customer, always.

Marylanders have given us an opportunity to build a government that works for the people. I've started this process by asking every agency to fully embrace the customer service mindset with everything we do, from our day-to-day routine operations to long-term decision-making. The highest level of customer service is proactive — anticipating and serving a need or wish of a customer before that wish is even voiced.

Together, Secretary Mark Belton and I have established a new Office of Citizen Services at the Department of Natural Resources to improve citizens' experiences and enhance accountability.

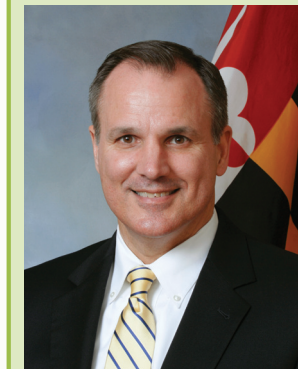
This team will be working across the agency with an initial focus on expanding employee training in customer service as well as streamlining permitting and licensing processes to make them more user-friendly and efficient. The group will also identify and lead a new customer service matrix team, to keep all units fully engaged.

We have also tasked our employees to deliver enhanced service, and resolve problems. I believe you will see these changes at our beautiful state parks, in DNR offices, and even when you contact DNR employees by phone and email.

I believe there is always room for improvement, and the best organizations constantly assess their interactions with customers with an eye on how to advance service delivery. If each of us vowed to do one more thing each day — take one extra step for our customers and fellow citizens — imagine how we can change Maryland for the better.


Larry Hogan
Governor

ABOVEBOARD



During my first four months as DNR Secretary, I've had the opportunity to visit many diverse parts of our state. I spoke to local leaders, community members and DNR employees about their natural resource needs and concerns at Deep Creek Lake, Savage River State Forest and Big Run State Park in Garrett County. I attended an event with the U.S. Department of the Interior at the Douglas Point State Resource Management Area, one of DNR's properties

on the Potomac River where we urged full sponsorship of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. I enjoyed a day with Maryland Green School students, our future stewards, next to the bay at Sandy Point State Park.

While each experience was unique and informative, one trip that was especially meaningful to me, given my military background, was a recent day in Washington County at Antietam National Battlefield.

I took a tour with a group of people that included federal officials from the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior, state officials and Washington County commissioners, as well as several private sector conservation organizations. Despite our varied affiliations, the entire group works together with one common vision: preserving the battlefield and its surrounding areas.

Upon seeing the landscape, it quickly became evident why this mission is so important to so many different stakeholders. The event is known as "the bloodiest one-day battle in American history," and the view of the terrain is simultaneously haunting and powerful. Here, in September 1862, the Battle of Antietam was fought. It ended Robert E. Lee and the Confederate Army's first invasion into the North and sparked President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, delivered five days later.

It also resulted in 23,000 dead, injured or missing soldiers after just twelve hours of combat.

I understand that the landscape still looks very similar to how it did more than 150 years ago. It has been well-preserved — modern-day life has minimally encroached on this now peaceful space. Through ongoing partnerships, we continue to strive to ensure it stays that way. Antietam fuels tourism and is a vital part of the economic development in Washington County. Equally important, it gives visitors a memorable impression of our state's and our nation's history. It is one of the many exceptional places we are fortunate to have in Maryland.

Now that summer has arrived, I encourage you to explore this national park, one of our many state parks, or a local park. Whether you are learning about our past, hiking across a tree-lined trail, or simply sitting on a swing, remember the significance of preserving these lands.


Mark J. Belton
Secretary